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## [Nov. 16] Welcome to EPA's new Lean Management System (LMS)

by Widener, Charles (Chuck) at 2:00 PM in [News Posts](#)



Colleagues,

As a follow up to my [July message in This Week @ EPA](#), I am updating you on our efforts to establish the **EPA Lean Management System (ELMS)** to focus the agency on continuous improvement and shared accountability. At its core, ELMS involves:

- Measuring what matters and setting targets;
- Visually tracking performance against targets and identifying gaps between our targets and actual results; and
- Using countermeasures to close the gaps when we're not meeting targets.

With this approach, we'll be able to identify those areas that we want to improve the most, while maintaining the integrity and quality of our other important work.

I am pleased to share with you that I am assembling a team under my leadership to deploy ELMS. The first two members of the team are Serena McIlwain, who is serving as EPA's Performance Improvement Officer, and Kevin DeBell, who is my Special Assistant. Serena comes to us from EPA Region 9, where she served for three years as Assistant Regional Administrator. Kevin most recently served as Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Environmental Management in the Office of Policy. I am also establishing an Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) within the Office of the Administrator to provide structure and stability to the agency's process improvement efforts. I aim to staff OCI with Lean experts internal to EPA.

Measurement is essential to understanding how well we are carrying out our very important mission, and that begins with our Strategic Plan measures. On Oct. 4, Administrator Pruitt released [EPA's FY 2018-2022 Draft Strategic Plan](#) and [strategic measures](#). Our strategic measures began with the Administrator's clear set of priorities and were developed with significant input from EPA's career senior leaders. The strategic measures clearly identify those areas in which we will strive to make significant improvements during the next five years. EPA leaders are currently setting aggressive targets for each strategic measure. I encourage you to read the Strategic Plan for insight into the areas in which we will become much better during the next several years.

In addition to the strategic measures, your senior leaders are developing **mission measures** to reflect what our customers value and what the American taxpayers expect as a return on their investment in EPA. As we focus on making significant improvements in the strategic measures, we also have to keep doing well in these other areas. On a monthly basis, using business review meetings, we will track our progress on both the strategic measures and mission measures and resolve problems that are preventing us from meeting our targets.

I want to extend my appreciation to EPA's excellent Lean facilitators, who have provided support for our efforts to date – big thanks to David Ack, Mike Appleby, Pankaj Arora, Rob Cannon, Kim Green-Goldsborough, Laura Poole, Amit Raikar, Tamara Saltman, and Chris Taylor. I would also like to thank Marc Olender for his top-notch technical support.

Our next steps in developing and deploying ELMS include:

- Working with our Lean contractors to establish a standard way of conducting Lean Kaizen events to maximize opportunities for success and maintain improvements over time;
- Performing Kaizen events in a series of waves for each of the process-focused strategic measures and priority areas;
- Working with EPA regional offices to develop their own mission measures and monthly business review process;

- organizational level, creating visual management for tracking our progress, holding regular reviews of performance, and providing basic problem solving training; and
- Identifying EPA staff members with passion for and training in continuous process improvement to lead deployment of ELMS. We will create a means to self-nominate for this role and will let you all know when that happens.

Lastly, to bolster our efforts to keep you informed of our work, we have developed an [ELMS Intranet site](#). I encourage you to check out the site now and refer to it often, since it serves as a central point of information on ELMS. Many thanks to the Office of Internal Communications for their assistance in establishing this site. We plan to continually improve it, and you can assist us by using the feedback box to give us suggestions or request information or assistance from our team.

The success of the **EPA Lean Management System** depends on each of us. Together, we will solve the challenges we face, promote accountability without blame, and sustain the process improvements we make. This effort may not always be easy, especially at first, but we will learn and grow together. I look forward to working more closely with all of you to deliver EPA's critically important mission.

Henry Darwin  
Assistant Deputy Administrator and Chief of Operations

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